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**December 21, 2015**

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### **Holiday Greetings - Next Weekly Connection on 1-4-2016**

All of us here in the Illinois SBDC Network and the Department of Commerce Entrepreneurship and Small Business Programs would like to offer each of you, your families and loved ones the very, very best for this Holiday Season. We hope you have a Fantastic Christmas and a Happy, Prosperous and Peaceful New Year ! ! !

Please note that the next edition of the Illinois SBDC Network Weekly Connection email will be distributed in the New Year on January 4, 2016. Enjoy the Holidays ! ! !

### **Spotlight on Success – HB Coatings LLC**

Ninety days is not much time to set up a large machine shop, form a new company, find a location and retain large original equipment manufacturing (OEM) clients from a failed firm. But that's precisely what Madison-based HB Coatings LLC has done with support and expertise from **Illinois Small Business Development Center at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville** and other organizations.

Through multiple connections and time-sensitive resources, the **SIU-E SBDC** assisted HB Coatings in a fast-paced, cleanly executed transition that is bringing jobs to the Metro East.

HB Coatings is a full-service thermal spray coating machine shop with clients in a wide range of industries including construction, metals and durable goods. Chairwoman and co-owner Ashley Hunsaker and her husband, Jason, combined her accounting and his sales experience with well-

known thermal spray operations expert Duane Boehnke to open HB Coatings in Madison's Eagle Industrial Park. Jeannie Boehnke also co-owns the business.

The genesis for HB Coatings began when Jason and Duane learned in July that their employer, St. Louis Metallizing, was shutting down in late August after 60 years in business. The HB Coatings team worked diligently on a business plan in just three months. They obtained financing, rebranded, located space in Southwestern Illinois, hired workers and accomplished all this while retaining the former machine shop's A-list clients.

As part of the process, Ashley Hunsaker located the **SIU-E SBDC** on Google and contacted **Director Patrick McKeehan**. With one short phone call, McKeehan was fully on-board and ready to help. "We met with Patrick and the SBDC in late June and asked for a range of assistance," said Hunsaker, who at the time had just given birth to the couple's third child. "The SBDC quickly helped us fine-tune our business plan, made introductions to potential lenders, connected us with a legal advisor and prepared our team for becoming operational as soon as humanly possible. It was – and still is – an extremely fast-paced, rewarding process."

One of the **SBDC's** more valuable contributions was to familiarize the Hunsaker's with the SBA as part of an effort to obtain more than \$1 million in asset funding and a working line of credit. The new owners were under considerable pressure trying to recover from four weeks lost in a failed application with a different lender.

McKeehan directed the Hunsaker's to Tim Whitten, a representative from SBA-certified micro lending institution Justine PETERSEN. Whitten recommended the couple to Adree Abele at Midwest Regional Bank. Abele's significant SBA loan experience allowed her to work quickly with the couple to complete the loan packaging and guarantee process.

"Support from Patrick and Tim helped us secure our loans in record-breaking time," Hunsaker said. "Adree told us that in the thousands of SBA loans she's worked on, she has never seen a loan approved more quickly than ours."

McKeehan was also impressed by the speed of the process. "Ashley and Jason put together a fantastic support team," said McKeehan. "They followed suggestions, made quick adjustments and built a convincing business case that led to a startup with tremendous opportunities."

Despite all the inherent complexities of launching a new business in a highly competitive, quality-sensitive industry, the HB Coatings team was able to capture a majority of the former company's major clients. "We're pushing hard to begin work on the purchase orders accumulated from our new clients during the past 90 days," Hunsaker said. "Once our key clients learned that we were able to retain the same highly trained staff that the previous company had employed, several clients renewed their contracts on the spot." HB Coatings is conservatively projecting revenues to surpass \$4 million, with up to eight employees in the first 12 months. Learn more about HB Coatings at: <http://www.hbcoatings.com/>

### **SBDC's In The News – InnovateHER Business Challenge**

The Illinois Small Business Development Center at Champaign County EDC, in partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration, recently announced that IntelliWheels, Inc. was the winner of the

local InnovateHER Business Challenge. A panel of judges selected IntelliWheels as the first place winner with MakerGirl as the runner-up and Helion Comics as the third place finalist.

**Tinker**, created by IntelliWheels, is the first ever 3D product configurator in the wheelchair marketplace. Configurators have been utilized for years to allow consumers to design cars, shoes, bicycles and other products. They give customers unparalleled levels of feedback and control over the product they are ordering and they function as an incredible communication tool between customers and manufacturers. Tinker's goal is to create transparency in the wheelchair industry and using educational tools, empower wheelchair users, their families and caregivers to ensure their voice is clearly heard in the wheelchair ordering process. IntelliWheels will receive a cash prize of \$750 and their proposal will be submitted to the SBA's semifinal round for the chance to compete for up to \$70,000 in cash prizes. To learn more about IntelliWheels and Tinker, visit [www.intelliwheels.net](http://www.intelliwheels.net) and [www.tinker.fit](http://www.tinker.fit).

**MakerGirl** has a mission to inspire girls to be active in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). MakerGirl introduces 7-10 year old girls in the Champaign-Urbana area and beyond to the exciting world of STEM fields through educating these girls in the methods of 3D printing and other creative activities. All of their sessions teach young girls 3D printing, while also teaching them about women leaders in STEM fields, innovative companies, cutting edge technology, and much more. MakerGirl will receive a cash prize of \$500. To learn more about MakerGirl, visit [www.makergirl.us](http://www.makergirl.us).

**Helion Comics** is an independent comic production company. Their main project in development is *The Misfits*, a webcomic about a band of twentysomethings figuring out their individual identities, relationships, and studies. Oh, and their superpowers. *The Misfits* follow the lives of Aydan Alteo, Sarah Neng, and Yu Wang, first-year college students, as they come to grips with a series of bizarre circumstances. Helion Comics will receive a cash prize of \$250.

"We solicited applications from the region and assembled an extremely strong panel of fourteen women in leadership roles in Champaign County. The panel included a mayor, business owners, economic development specialists, executive directors of community organizations, and leaders from the University of Illinois Research Park and Parkland College. The response was strong and so was support from our community, not only via participation from the judges but also through financial sponsorship that allowed us to provide cash awards for three finalists," says SBDC Director Don Elmore.

The local challenge was sponsored by SBDC at Champaign County EDC, Busey, Stephens & Stull P.C., and Serra Ventures.



## **Maximizing Neoserra – Active or Almost Active Clients Per DLA 1806**

### **Definitions**

On the Neoserra home page, you will see several important links in the upper right hand pane. For PTAC or DUAL funded centers, one of these links will show you the total number of *DLA Active Clients* in the selected center. DLA Active clients are those clients with 30 minutes of counseling, or more, and it will identify those clients that have attended one or more of your workshops. Learn more at: <https://support.outreachsystems.com/resources/help/neoserra/faq.jsp?id=n261>

## **Valued Resources – How to Prepare for a Media Interview**

From *nfib.com*. If you manage to snag a media interview, congratulations! Experts estimate that, in print, earned media is three times as valuable as paid media of the same dimensions, helping to generate customers with essentially no cost per acquisition and establishing more credibility for your small business with your audience.

Make the most of your media opportunity by preparing for your interview in advance. Taking time to prepare will ensure you remember to bring up important points during your interview, provide thoughtful answers to questions and have the right supporting information and materials ready for additional support. You'll also be less likely to be blindsided by unexpected questions.

Open the link below to learn these media training tips: <http://www.nfib.com/article/bizhelp-how-to-prepare-for-a-media-interview-72209/>

## **Network News and Moves – Illinois PTAC at JA Logan**

Illinois PTAC at John A. Logan College Coverage - Please be advised, although the Illinois PTAC at John A. Logan College is currently without an official PTAC Director, the center is using the services of a PTAC consultant to provide client services. During this transition period, please continue to refer prospective PTAC clients in southern Illinois to Ann Spencer at [ann.spencer@jalc.edu](mailto:ann.spencer@jalc.edu) at 618-985-3741, ext. 8571.

## **Important Reminder – Reporting Deadline**

All Illinois SBDCs, Illinois SBDC International Trade Centers, Illinois SBDC with TIES and Illinois PTACs,

As you know December 31, 2015 marked the end of Federal Fiscal Year 2015, the end of the 4th Quarter for Illinois SBDC Performance Year 2015, as well as the completion of 6 months for the

Illinois Fiscal Year and the Illinois PTAC Program Year. It is vital that each center compile ALL of its outstanding client information and make sure it is **ALL entered into Neoserra by close of business (COB), Friday, January 15, 2016**. These are very important reporting periods for our State and Federal stakeholders. It is extremely important that all of the center performance information is entered into Neoserra.

SPECIAL NOTE: Please remember to change the status of your new business start clients from not-in-business to in-business client.

The information that needs to be entered into Neoserra ASAP includes all new client profiles and client advising activity, all outstanding business advisor notes, all client milestones and any outstanding economic impact information, the required narrative reports and success story profiles. Please be sure to follow up with your clients and secure any outstanding economic impact verifications and attributions to ensure you receive credit for your efforts. Also, please don't forget to enter all of your program costs for Jan-December 2015 into the Grantee Reporting system (GRS) as soon as possible. Thank you for giving this important notice your utmost attention.

### **America's SBDC Network Connect**

The latest edition of the [America's SBDC Network Connect Newsletter](#) can be found by [CLICKING HERE](#). Check out the access to a number of resources available to your Illinois SBDC as a part of the America's SBDC Network.

### **2016 National Small Business Week Awards**

U.S. Small Business Administration Illinois District Office announced that SBA's online portal is accepting nominations for its 2016 National Small Business Week Awards competition, including nominations for the prestigious Small Business Person of the Year award. Following its SBA slogan - Smart, Bold, and Accessible - SBA has improved its dedicated [website](#). In years past, there were multiple forms, letters, and documents that were part of NSBW nomination/submission process. But using the new 2016 nomination criteria, submission packages have been simplified and streamlined where nominees are only required to submit one form and a questionnaire. This improved dedicated website (<http://awards.sba.gov>) provides all the tools necessary to make it much easier to submit and track submission packages for National Small Business Week.

Since 1963, National Small Business Week has recognized the outstanding achievements of America's small businesses for their contributions to their local communities, and to our nation's economy. As of today, SBA continues this tradition of honoring our nation's best small businesses.

SBA Awards given in celebration of National Small Business Week, May 2-6, 2016, include the following:

National Small Business Person of the Year (chosen from among state award winners from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam)

Exporter of the Year

Phoenix Awards for Disaster Recovery (recognizing outstanding accomplishments during disaster recovery)

- Small Business Disaster Recovery
- Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery (Public Official)
- Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery (Volunteer)

Federal Procurement Awards

- Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year
- Small Business Subcontractor of the Year
- The Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for Excellence (recognizes large prime contractors who have used small businesses as suppliers and contractors)
- SBA 8(a) Graduate of the Year (for recent graduates of the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program)

Jody C. Raskind Lender of the Year (Recognizing outstanding mission- focused lender contributions in underserved markets)

Small Business Investment Company of the Year

Awards to SBA Resource Partners

- Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Excellence and Innovation Award (nominations of SBA-funded SBDC Service Centers)
- Women's Business Center (WBCs) of Excellence Award (nominations of SBA-funded WBCs)
- Veterans Business Outreach Center Excellence in Service Award (nominations of SBA-funded Veterans Business Outreach Centers)

State of Illinois Awards include:

SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year (Owner will not reach 30th Birthday by June 1, 2016)

Emerging/Innovative Small Business Person of the Year (three year track record with no more than \$2.5 million in sales generated by 25 people or less)

All national nominations must be submitted online, postmarked or hand delivered to the SBA no later than 3 p.m. EST, Monday, Jan. 11, 2016. In addition to the website/portal, questions regarding nominations/submission instructions for the State of Illinois Awards should be directed to Mark Ferguson (312-253-5430 or [mark.ferguson@sba.gov](mailto:mark.ferguson@sba.gov)) of the Illinois District Office. For general contact information, please visit online at [www.sba.gov/il](http://www.sba.gov/il)



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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and Illinois Department of Commerce Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the Illinois SBDC Network to provide our service delivery partners with current updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. Please send information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to [Tom.Becker@illinois.gov](mailto:Tom.Becker@illinois.gov). Please feel free to forward this update to any other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

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**Department of Commerce**

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Bruce Rauner, Governor

